

PANEL OF CHAIRMEN.

President : Under Rule 3 (1) of the Travancore Legislative Rules, I have to announce that I have nominated Mr. Kochikal P. Balakrishnan Tampi and Mr. K. K. Thomas to the Panel of Chairmen during the current Session of this Council.

RULING OF THE PRESIDENT.

President : Honourable Members will remember that during the last meeting of the Council certain points of order were raised for the decision of the Chair and I had promised to examine them and give my rulings at this Session. One of those points was whether the answering of a starred question by placing a statement on the table was in order and sufficient, as it deprived the members of the opportunity for putting supplementary questions thereon. As I said in the other House the other day, answering an interpellation by laying a statement on the table if such a procedure was unavoidable, even though the interpellation itself did not ask for such a statement, is a well recognised practice in the Legislative Chambers in British India. The House may be aware that on one occasion, the same point specifically came up for consideration in the Indian Legislative Assembly when an honourable member contended that the laying of a statement was not by itself a sufficient answer to a starred question, unless it was read out in the House. It was then ruled by the Chair that the procedure of placing the statement on the table was usual and unobjectionable. I do not find in the Rules or Standing Orders relating to the conduct of business in this House any provision which enables the President to compel the Government member to answer a question in a particular manner. The sufficiency of the answer and the method of answering a question are matters left to the discretion of the answering member, though, I should emphasise that this discretion should be wisely and appropriately used. My ruling therefore is that it is perfectly in order to answer a question by laying a statement on the table, even if the question itself did not specifically ask for such a statement. But, I trust that this procedure will be resorted to as rarely as possible.

I would also take this opportunity to prescribe the procedure to be followed in laying statements on the table. The statements are laid by merely handing them over at the Secretary's table. This is the practice in the Indian Legislative Assembly and elsewhere. Such statements are neither read nor copies thereof circulated among the members. They are incorporated in the printed proceedings of the House for the day and circulated to honourable members in the usual course.

[President]

Another point that came up for consideration during the last meeting was the convention established in this House by which no member is allowed to rise in his place more than once for putting supplementary questions. It seems to me that the fair and correct rule, having regard to the interest of all the members of the House is that one member should ordinarily be given only one opportunity, to put his series of supplementary questions. It should be remembered that a supplementary question is generally intended to clear up what might have seemed obscure in the answer given to the original question but not on answers given in reply to supplementary questions themselves. I do not therefore propose to interfere at present with the convention observed in this House. I shall, however, watch how the convention works in practice and in the light of experience so gained reconsider it, if found necessary, in the interest of the House as a whole. Let me add that in exceptional circumstances, I am prepared to allow more opportunities than one to any member asking supplementary questions, if I feel convinced that such a concession is really necessary.

Now I shall turn to the discussion on the Budget. Under Rule 74 the debate on it will begin to-day with a general discussion and the voting of demands for grants will follow it from to-morrow. The maximum time of 4 days has been allowed for the latter. As honourable members are aware the demands will be discussed in the order in which they are printed in the list supplied to them already.

In calculating the number of hours to be allotted for the voting of demands, the following procedure will be adopted. A day will be taken as from 11 A. M. to 5 P. M. of which the first hour is available for questions and another hour (1 to 2 P. M.) as lunch interval. The remaining four hours will be treated as a full day and two hours as half a day. If the time taken up for questions and answers is less than an hour, the remaining time will also be available to the House for the voting of demands. Such available time will not, however, go to increase the time allotted for any one demand but will only enable the House to discuss more demands.

As the House knows half a day each is allowed for the voting of demands for grants under I—Education, II—Public Works Department, and VI—Land Revenue. The remaining demands will have to be dealt with before the close of the fourth day and not more than one hour will be allotted to any one of these demands.

Honourable members of the Council are of course aware that they should discuss each demand as a whole and vote upon it as a whole without moving for the reduction of any grant or of any item in a grant.

During the general discussion every member, other than the Financial Secretary, will be allowed not more than 15 minutes. During the second stage, *i. e.* in the voting of demands for grants, the time limit for speeches for all members will be 10 minutes. As a matter of general convenience it would be well if the honourable members will so adjust their participation in the debate as to afford sufficient time to the official members for elucidating points and dispelling doubts, which might have arisen in the course of such discussion failing which, I am afraid, the discussion will lack in completeness.

Mr. R. Nilakanta Pillai : Sir, certain cuts were made by the Sri Mulam Assembly in the voting on demands for grants. These cuts are as follows :—

Education Department	...	Re.	1
Public Works Department	...	Rs.	5
Industries Department	...	Rs.	4,800
Land Revenue Department	...	Rs.	5
Forest Department	...	Re.	1

Government have accepted these cuts and the Budget already laid before the Council may be treated as having been amended to that extent. Sir, I beg permission to do so.

President : Yes. Leave is granted.

Mr. M. N. Paramesvaran Pillai : May I know from the member whether the principles underlying these cuts have also been accepted?

Mr. R. Nilakanta Pillai : The money cuts have been accepted.

GENERAL DISCUSSION OF THE BUDGET.

President : The House will now proceed with the general discussion of the budget.

Mr. M. Govindan (Nominated) : Sir, I wish to make a few observations regarding the budget that has been presented to us by the Financial Secretary. To begin with, I wish to speak a few words about the Sinking Fund. The Financial Secretary assures us that Rs. 69,43,000 would be available from the Sinking Fund which we have been contributing to for the purpose of purchasing the Quilon-Shencotta Railway after 1945. Government has recorded its thanks to the Legal and Constitutional Adviser to His Highness the Maha Raja for the services rendered by him in getting by correspondence the Government of India to agree to our contention that there is no obligation on our part to make the purchase after 1945, but that it is optional